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नमस्ते शारदा देवी कश्मीर पुरवासिनी

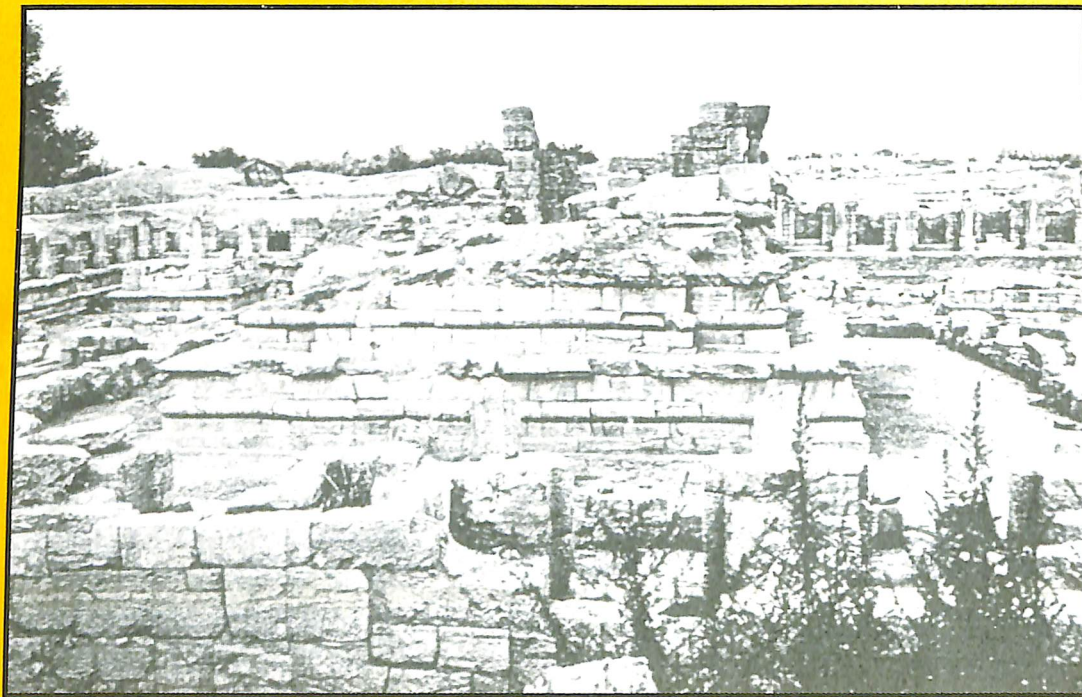


नीलमतम्

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Avantisvami Temple ruins before excavation. (Note River Jehlum on the left)
(Photo courtesy: Survey of India, 1915)



Avantisvami Temple ruins after excavation. (A view from East)
(Photo courtesy: Survey of India, 1915)



Inscription containing Avantivarman's name.
(Photo courtesy: Survey of India, 1915)

SHAIVAGAAMA continued from previous issue

By P.N.Kachru

In our previous issue the Kashmir Shaivagaamas have been traced from the remotest possible source to the latest developments so far as its history, its thought and the available literature is concerned.

In continuation of the subject an effort will be made to discover the personalities who have contributed to its founding and its furtherance. The *Agamas* and other sources relate that the oldest known contributor to the *Paashupata* sect was named *Lakulisha*. He was known to have four disciples who furthered the moment; namely – *Kushika*, *Gargeya*, *Kurusha* and *Maitreya*. It is said that *Lakulisha* was preceded by about twenty eight incarnations who are listed as masters. The only available treatise on this system by *Lakulisha* is known as *Pashupata Sutra*¹. It is supposed to be fabulous and thousands in number. Later, this current is further led by one *Shrikantha* who lived in second century B.C., and whose teachings (*shaasana*) consist of five major streams of *Shaivaagama* titles as *Shrikantha-Sutra*. So these two currents – that of *Pashupata Sutra* and *Shrikantha Sutra*, originated from *Lakulisha* and *Shrikantha*, have become the basis for furtherance of Kashmir Shaiva system². The *Shrikantha Sutra* particularly, in the ultimate analysis, gains importance by becoming the basis of the *Trika* system of Kashmir Shaivism. *Pashupata* sect had another variant called *Kaapalikas*. The sect, in addition to

Paashupata attributes, possessed *Kapaala* (skull), thus were also named as *Kapaalavartin*. The group is supposed to have led an un-intellectual path that was beyond and bereft of all the bindings and shackles of knowledge, reason, logic and argumentation. They termed their path as higher path (*Atimarga*); and worshipped *Svachanda-Bhairava*. The *Svachanda Tantra* calls the higher path beyond all intellectual notions; and the knowledge of it transcends the world³. The keynote of *Kapaalika*'s faith was *Bhakti* – the personal devotion to personal god. This god is identified as Shiva in his terrific *Bhairava* incarnation. To attain liberation (*Mukti*) he would perpetually dwell in sexual bliss, and savour the *Panchmakaras* of Tantric tradition. A later text – *Kularnavatantra*, is explicit on this practice.

The *Goraksha Sidhanta Sangraha* (anonymous authorship) lists twelve sages to whom the *Kapaalika* doctrine was revealed. They were – *Aadinath*, *Anadinath*, *Kaalanath*, *Atikalanath*, *Karaalanath*, *Vikralanath*, *Mahaakalanath*, *Kaalabhairavanath*, *Batukanath*⁴, *Bhutanath*, *Veeranath* and *Shrikanthanath*. This group of sages belong to the sect called *Naatha Sampradai*. Each of these sages had a disciple, who in order are – *Nagarjuna*, *Jadabharata*, *Harishchandra*, *Satyanatha*, *Bhimanatha*, *Gorakhanatha*, *Carpatanatha*, *Avadyanatha*, *Vairagyanatha*, *Kanthadari*,

1. Later, *Pashupatas* worshipped Shiva according to procedures enjoined by *Vaatala Tantra*
2. Much later, in tenth century, *Abhinavagupta* associates these two trends with the monistic Tantric traditions which have contributed to the formation of Kashmir Shaivism, and sees them intimately related to the *Kaula* and *Bhairava Tantras*.
3. *Abhinavagupta* links all the *Pashupata* sects and groups collectively called *Atimarg*, with *Kaula* traditions. He says, "once they attain liberation there is no difference at all between those men who have been properly initiated into the *Atimarg*, and other currents in the supreme *Lords Scripture*". (*Tantraloka Vartika*)
4. Kashmiri hindus were followers of this sage, and performed the ritual (even now) of offering to *Batukanath* and his consort. Even to date the ritual is performed where offerings are made to *Vatukanath* on every *Shivaratri* pooja. The couple of clay pottery pitchers and other demunitive clay-ware, filled with walnuts are worshipped with variegated offerings like cooked rice, meat, fish, curd, candies and flowers etc. in certain houses even wine is offered to the *Vatuka Bhairava*. Kashmiris belonging to *Bhatuka* lineage were being named *Bhatuka* simplified as *Bhatta*.

Jalandara and Malyarjunanatha.

Aadinatha, the first sage of the *Sampradai*, is supposed to have a separate branch of lineage in which *Matsendranath* has been named as his disciple, who had a disciple named *Gorakhnatha*.

The mathas followed the doctrine laid down in *Kubjika Tantra*; and also the Kapaalika practice of savouring *Panchamakaras*.

The inception of third century B.C. experienced the seepage of an alternative thought. The Buddhist thought ushered in with the royal patronage of Ashoka – the great. The simplistic tenets of the thought did not create any irksomeness in the socio-religious pattern of life, except that the people addressed their diety as Buddha instead Bhairava. Thus the Buddhist tenets in Kashmir were ornamented with the details of he prevalent *Tantra*, *Mantra* and *Yantra* practices. Consequently, in course of time Kashmir became a strong and influential centre of *Mahaayana* Buddhist current; of course, leaving apart a sizeable section of elite, who continued with the thought and practice of *Agamas*. The beginning of first century B.C. received a positive and well organized flip up to the propagation of *Mahaayanist* system. The physical presence of Kanishka in the valley struck the observation of the king with the prevailing condition of Buddhism. So in order to put again the system on line, the king assembled four hundred and ninety nine (499) monks under the leadership of Kashmiri monk Vasumitra, and directed them to lay down the tenets of the thought⁵. The

king wanted the deliberations of the assembly to be held in his capital city, Gandhara, but the monks expressed their reluctance to leave the valley. They argued, as described by Huen-Tsang⁶ that “we cannot go there, because there are many heretical teachers (Hindus) there and different *Shaastras* being under discussion and there will be vain clamour and discussion⁷. The mind of the *Assembly* is well-affected towards this country; the land is guarded on every side by mountains, the *Yakshas*⁸ defend its frontiers, the soil is rich and productive, and it is well provided with food. Here both saints and sages assemble and abide; here the spiritual *Rishi*’s wander and rest⁹”. The other historic happening was arrival of the Buddhist logician and dialectician named Nagarjuna (130 A.D), who had to face an interaction with the local *Aagama Shaiva Tantrics*; who commanded, still then, a sizeable population¹⁰. Nagarjuna’s presence in Kashmir, only once, finds its expression in Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini*, that Nagarjuna stayed at the monastery of *Shad-arhad Vana* (Haarvan).

Buddha’s solution of life being *Nirvana* had left it undefined, unresolved and unexplained, leaving an ample scope for its expression through the inclusion of prevalent ritualistic practices from Kashmir *Agamas* and *Tantras*, thus terming it *Mahayaana*, and dividing Buddhism in to two schools of thought. Nagarjuna’s effort for unification through his philosophical argumentations tried to chalk out a middle path that resulted in the work titled *Madhyamika Kaarika*.

5. These five hundred monks composed ten myriads of verses to explain the Vinaya Pitaka containing the tenets of Sarvaastivad (the doctrine that all existence is real it clearly indicates the influence of Agamas). Another ten myriads of works, Abhidharma also on Sarvaastivad, were composed.

6. Si-yu-ki, translation Samuel Beal “Buddhist Records of the Western World”

7. This is a clear indication that Gandhara was still predominated by Hindus while the Buddhist faith was well-poised in Kashmir.

8. Perhaps there are the Margapatis, and Drangeshas of Kashmir chronicle who guarded the Drangs, the mountain passes leading to the valley.

9. This is reflecting a strong spiritual tolerance by Kashmiris of various trends and faiths.

10. The powerful Mahayanist Buddhism and its Sarvaastivad was the direct result of the interaction between the Buddhist tenets and the Aagama Shaiva practice.

His interpretation of *Nirvaana* was to achieve *voidness* (*shunya*). Thus he preached the *non-exclusive* understanding as the way to the skillfulness of *non-clinging*. He emphasized on the *non-contentiousness*, which he regarded as the very heart of the teachings of Buddha. Nagarjuna pleads that the thirst for *real* in man is misplaced by his tendency to seize and cling to *relative* as *absolute*, which leads to suffering and to dead-end (*anata*). By right understanding one understands the *determinate* and *indeterminate*, not as separate entities but existent by virtue of each other. To understand them as separate entities or interdependent, both concepts lead to misconceptions, therefore, neither *this* nor *that* but the intermediate – the *Neti-Neti* or *No-end*. So the *No-End* or *Shunya* is the very nature of both *existent* and *non-existent*. So the ultimate sense of *voidness* (*Shunya*) is the thirst for the *Real*, and thus its realization being the real nature of one self.

The *middle way* (*Madhyamika*), therefore, preaches the rejection of *views*; which means that *no – view* being a view is *ultimate*. The ultimate truth is *not-any-view*. The different forms of exclusive views, whether in terms of absolute identity or absolute difference, are simply reducible to the forms of extremism and negativism. To abandon these views, is to give up the claim of relative completeness; and thus what remains is *void* (*Shunya*).

Nagarjuna does not negate anything, for there is nothing to be negated, nor a negation. So by making known the voidness of all things, it only expresses, though indirectly, the *Absolute* which is perfectly isolated from all appearances.

Nagarjuna's conclusions were purely based on his logical disputations, but were not, as

a *Kashmiri Shaivist* would argue, based on reality and actuality. To experience and achieve *Shunya* meant to go through the experience. Nagarjuna simply concluded but did not have the experience and confirmation of what he had arrived at through his dialectic argumentation. To realize and inculcate *voidism* meant to have the experience, which the *Aagamic* practitioners had experienced through their practices. Their explicit revelations, not only of the condition of the bliss (*shunya*), but also furthered the ascension to the ultimate flowering *Shunita*, and leading to *Shunyati Shunya*. They further argued that *Absolute* (*Shunya*) being an experience of the *condition* or *Non-condition* presupposes the *Experiant* and the *Experienced*. Without the *Experiant* the experience of *Void* (*shunya*) would not be possible. It is this experience of the *Absolute* that further transforms its nature by awakening of *Shunyatishunya* as the *Sahasraara* where supreme Omniscience prevails. It's called the *ultimate* (*chit*) or *Paraasamvit* – the *non-relational conscienciousness*, and the appearance of the *changeless principle of all the changes*.

Consequently then, the *Aagama Shaivas* being non-theoreticians and only given to *practical* and *ritualistic* methods, they evolved an amazing system called *Kundalini Yoga*.

This yoga lays the basis and recognizes the two basic energies that the practitioner possesses: the *Shaareerik shakti* (the physical energy) and *Maansik shakti* (the mental energy). An *Aagama* recognizes an intermediary energy between the two; and recognises it as the vital force or *biological energy* – called *Praana Shakti*. This energy (though in abstraction) finds its location in-between Body and Mind (the

physical energy and mental energy). *Praana* is not *Mind*; it is insentient and it is *subtle biological energy* which catches the vibrations of mind and transmits them to the nerves and plexes, and transfers physical vibrations to *mind*.

Praana is the first evolute of consciousness; therefore is not something alien to consciousness. It is therefore called *Praana Shakti* – life source. It has a sort of inclination towards consciousness. This *Praanashakti* or life force cannot be contacted or communicated. It is only through the *Breath* that *Praana* can be communicated. As this *praanashakti* is in contact with the *Breath*, therefore can be contacted and influenced through it. This intimate relationship with the *Breath* is sometimes called *Praana-vaayu*. The breath, when *exhaled* is termed *Praana*, its *inhalation* is *Apaana*. The exhalation and inhalation, when interpreted sonically, becomes *Sa* and *Ha*. So an individual recites, though involuntarily, *Sa+Ha*; and by constant repetition turns into *Ha+Sa* = *Hamsa* – *I am He*. The individual, thus always, recites this *Mantra*. So this recitation is the initial *Praana* (*Aadi Praana*) for the practitioner (*Saadak*) which becomes the first evolute of transformation.

Getting poised over this breathing recitation, one starts the meditation on initial *five voids* (*Sunya Panchakam*) or the five *Tanmaatras* – the quitesence (as such). These five *Tanmaatras* are: *Shabda Tanmaatra* (sound as such), *Sparsha Tanmaatra* (touch as such), *Roopa Tanmaatra* (colourful as such), *Rasa Tanmaatra* (flavour as such) and *Gandha*

Tanmaatra (odour as such).

Prior to above, the perfect recitation of *Pranava*¹¹ should take place. The recitation should be protracted, but first short (*Hrasva*) then long (*deergha*) and then subtle-protracted (*pluta*).

After the recitation one has to concentrate on *Shunya*. *Shunya* means free of all external¹² and internal¹³ objective supports and of all *Tattva* or the residual¹⁴ traces of *Kleshaas* (*Vaasanas*).

The *Vaasanas* are: a) *Avidya*, the superficial and mundane thoughts; b) *Asmita*, the asymmetry and unevenness of mind; c) *Raaga*, attachment; d) *Dvesha*, the aversion and repugnance; and e) *Abhinivesh* (perseverance, deliberation or consideration.)

So, to be free of all the above conditions means to attain *Shunya*. The mind has to be free, or be *Nirvikalpa* (free of all options, alternatives and thoughts). What remains then, is the eminent energy called *Paraashakti*. Thus attaining *void* means attaining the nature of *Bhairava*.

After freeing oneself from *Vaasanas* and *Vikalpaas* (options, alternatives, uncertainty), the practitioner perfects his experience of *void* (*shunya*) over and above (*Sahasraara*), at the base (*Muladhaara*) and at the *centre* (*hridaya*). There upon arises, at the same time, the state of *Shiva* (*Nirvikalpodayah*) or *Shunyaati-shunya* – *beyond Shunya*. The verse 45 of *Vigyaana Bhairava* reveals the condition thus:

11. The Shaiva Pranava is Hoom, and Shaakta Pranava is Hreem.

12. The gross objects (material) of Mind.

13. Pleasure, pain etc. of Mind

14. The traces of *Vaasanas* like Passions, Desires, impressions in the memory of subconscious or unconscious state of Mind.

While firmly poised over the contemplation over the *void above*, the *void at the base* and *void at the heart*, there arises in the practitioner, who being free of all *Vikalpas*, the state of Shiva – the Nirvikalpa.

So, the situation that follows is that which cannot be known as an object, that which cannot be grasped (is elusive) and that penetrates even non-existence. At the end of the contemplation will occur *Enlightenment*, or the merger in *Bhairava* – the highest Reality. It is this reality from which pulsates the *Existence* and *non-Existence*. The power of this *universal*

consciousness is its inherent creative flash, though in itself unchanging, it is the source of all change. It is the *Absolute Being* (*Mahaasatta*), but at the same time, is free to be *Anything*. It is the source of all Existent (*Bhaava*) and not non-Existent (*Abhaava*).

Thus *Bhairava* (Shiva) is designated as *Shuny-daama*, the very abode of *void*, but in *itself* at the same time as *Nirakaash* transcending all void (*attishunya*), *ashunya* (non-void), the *base and foundation* of *void itself*.

THE KONG-POSH

– P.N.Kachru

Kong Posh is the Kashmiri name for saffron of the crocus family which grows in abundance over the extensive lacustrine soil table lands (Karevas) of well-known area in the neighbourhood of Pampore town of Kashmir.

The topic over here is not that of the famous flower, but of the journal by that title that became popular in the beginning of the post Independence era of Kashmir. Kong Posh happens to be first journal of Kashmiri language published as an official organ of *National Cultural Congress*.

Before delving into its history and uniqueness of this magazine, I must, first of all feel obliged to my younger brother Mr. Omkar Kachru who was kind and gracious enough to permit me to use and go through his valuable file of collections of the magazine. Having lost my file due to the militancy and unrest back home, Mr. Omkar Kachru has

been magnanimous enough to allow me to quench my thirst for the study of the collection. Here in I have dealt with only those issues which had become significant milestones in the course of its passage; thus avoiding to make it a repetitive monotonous story. Kong Posh bears the heraldic position in the history and development of Kashmiri literature and culture.

It happens to be the founding and the first literary journal ever published in Kashmiri language, published as an official organ of the National Cultural Congress, that headed the Cultural Renaissance of post-Independence era. No doubt, it became an effective and authentic mouth-piece of literati, of poets and theatrical artists; but content wise the magazine remained politically committed to the left-socialist utopia due to the prevailing wave of change from monarchic feudalism.

No doubt, change became an effective rallying stage for Kashmiri poets and the literati, but could not contribute to the formal, creative and aesthetic development; but only created political and sloganist literature. The magazine, of course created a respected social position for the artist who, otherwise, in the past was kept at the outer-most periphery of the society; especially if he wrote in Kashmiri. However, formalistically the whole host of poetic stock remained wedded to the prevailing hackneyed persiano-eulogical style; while content wise replacing it with anti feudal, anti monarchical and anti Imperialist subjects. Poverty, hunger, exploitation, anti-rich and anti-landlordism were the subjects obsessively propagated through theatre, song and literature.

While in the process of trailing through the successive volumes of the journal one starts observing a positive development in the *form* and a change from the *hackneyed* to the *free flowing form* and an expression through the rich stock of Kashmiri vocabulary and terminology. The introduction of new forms like *couplets*, *sonnets*, *free verse* and *dramatic monologue* came into existence, thanks to the genius of *Nadim* who gave new aesthetic dimensions to Kashmiri poetry.

Kong-Posh bears the herald of beginning and introducing the short story writing in Kashmiri language. Both these trends of modern poetic form and short story writing originated from none other than Mr. *D.N.Nadim* who happened to be a versatile genius in poetry as well as prose. The journal bears on its leaves a new form of drama, like opera by *Nadim*, with musical and poetic dialogues and conversations.

All these developments sourced through a single fountain head named *Dina Nath Nadim*, who happened to be the founder of *Kong-Posh*.

The cue for all these aesthetic and formal revolutions were immediately taken up by poets *Rehman Rabi*, *Amin Kamil* and *Noor Mohammad Roshan*. The journal for the first time published Kashmiri short stories *Jawabi card* (Kong Posh, Feb 1950) and *Sheena Peto Peto* (Kong Posh, Jan 1952) written by *Dina Nath Nadim*. Later, those who followed were *Somnath Zutshi*, *Aziz Haroon*, *Noor Mohammad Roshan* and *Arjun Dev Majboor*. All these followers went in to the unnecessary details; perhaps, in order to portray the picture of the down-trodden; but it was only *Nadim* who could be short and precise, and at the same time accentuated the common life. He could be placed at par with the renowned short story writers like *Manpassant*, *Gorky* and *Adgar Alen Poe*.

The first and founding issue of *Kong-Posh* came out in early month of September 1949 (PLATE I), issued by the editorial board, whose members were Gulam Ahmad Mahjoor, Mirza Arif and D.N.Nadim. Somnath Zutshi was the managing editor. The issue carried some of the historic articles which documented the founding of cultural congress and a historic perspective of Kashmiri Culture. This detailed article was authored by Mr. Gulam Mohammad Sadiq, the then education minister, who also happened to be the president of the cultural congress (Kong Posh, Sep 1949). Actually the *Congress* was the changed name of previous *National Cultural Front* after re-organising it in order to provide the platform to all the cultural talent of Kashmir. Thus the *Cultural Congress*, a rejuvenated form of *National Cultural Front*, came into being on 15th May 1949.

On 3rd and 4th July 1949 the *congress* organized a two-day convention declaring its cultural programme to the people in an open and a massive session of 4th of July

1949. In this session *Dina Nath Nadim*, General Secretary presented a detailed report on the Cultural activity. This report came out in the founding issue of *Kong-Posh* under the title – “*Magar Kaaravan Son Bronh Bronh Pakaan Gav*”.

Kong Posh, February 1950 carried an illustrative title with the saffron sprouting and its tillers drawn by P.N.Kachru (PLATE II). Inside cover carried the sketch portrait of Abdul Sattar ‘Aasi’ the only labourer poet, who passed away on 12th January 1950 (PLATE III) – the sketch was drawn by Triloke Kaul, another artist of Progressive Artists Association.

Abdul Sattar happened to be the only labourer poet of the Cultural Congress who laboured at neighbouring *Hari Singh High Street* on daily wage earning. He used to compose poems in Persian as well as in Kashmiri. His Persian poems carried the happenings which he experienced as a street coolie. He completely turned to Kashmiri after attending a symposium held in S.P.College back on 6th November 1942. The symposium then was chaired by *Gulam Ahmad Mahjoor*. Since then Abdul Satar ‘Aasi’ continuously wrote Poetry in Kashmiri only.

The other striking feature of this issue was the appearance of a drama written by *Prem Nath Pardesi* in Kashmiri. Pardesi was a well-known Urdu short story writer who commenced writing in Kashmiri. The drama that appeared in *Kong-Posh*, Feb. 1950, was titled *Kuda-Gojwari*. This was the story built on the tyrannical Afghan rule in Kashmir, when a muslim Kashmiri baron, *Abdul Qadus Gojwari* was killed by Afghan governor, *Buland Khan* for having given shelter to the family of his friend *Birbal Dhar*.

The *Kong-Posh* issue of July 1950 carried over its title cover the illustration of the *Dove of Peace* (PLATE IV), a copy of the famous drawing done by world master *Pablo Picasso*. This drawing of Picasso did support and strengthen the world Peace Movement that was raging against the then cold war, threatening the world peace and progress. On the occasion of founding of the Jammu and Kashmir Peace council in the year 1950, *Kong Posh* heralded itself with the frontispiece of the replica of *Dove of Peace* (copied by P.N.Kachru), symbolizing the world Peace. Also, the speciality of the occasion was that Mr. D.N.Nadim became one of the founding members and general secretary of the State Peace Council.

This issue also carried a sad feature of the demise of two of our theatre enthusiasts and experts. The death of *Shyam ji Bakaya* was an irreparable loss to the theatre of the Cultural Congress. It was so deeply felt by the Cultural fraternity that Mr. Nadim cried in disbelief – *Zindabad Shyam ji*. A mute enthusiast, who ever suffered for pittance, craved for antidote and for a morsel, but ever swayed over the podium and left it, not even with an inaudible sigh. What a destiny of the genius!

The other gem named *Rughnath* was a mysterious manipulator of the *stage*. Always up-and-doing, with hammer and nails and erecting fixtures. Setting up scenes each behind the other, testing various light effects for different locales and atmospheres. He was a retired hand who served on the job in well-known S.P.College in Srinagar. He passed away with a smile and with no regrets.

The October issue, 1950 of the magazine relates to the progress of and the founding of state unit of *World Peace Movement*

which was founded in the month of June 1950. The October 1950 issue of Kong Posh records about the signature campaign that collected about ten thousand signatures, between June to October 1950 representing various sections of Kashmiri's like leaders, Mullas and Pandits, Professors and teachers, artists poets and writers, political workers, lawyers and Hakims and medical professionals. Representatives of various labour organizations added to the list quite substantially. Mr. D.N.Nadim happened to be one of the founders of the Peace Council besides G.M.Sadiq, Mirza Mohd. Afzal Beg, Pt. Jialal Kilam, Ms. Zainab Begum and Abdul Rehman Rahat. Mr. D.N.Nadim happened to be the General Secretary of the Peace Council. It was he who broke the ice and revolted against the cold war, resolving that he will never compose and sing (Ba Gyavana Az) now as the war-monger is up with a trap for my homeland. Mr. Nadim represented the State Council to the Indian Peace conference in 1951 and 1952. He subsequently toured China and Russia as one of the Indian representatives to the world Peace Council.

The Kong-Posh of March 1951 contains the details of second convention of National Cultural Congress. The journal contains the presentation of a report detailing the activities of the units of the Congress, and also documents the election of a new executive committee. The new members of the committee for the year 1951 were: Gulam Mohmad Sadiq – President; vice Presidents – justice Jia Lal Kilam, Gulam Ahmad Mahjoor and Abdul Rehman Rahat. General Secretary D.N.Nadim, secretary Sheila Bhatia and miss Mahmooda Ahmad Ali as the treasurer.

Here it would not be out of place to document the antecedents of one of the

committee members named Sheila Bhatia. She was a life-long theatrical activist of reputed *Indian Peoples Theatrical Association*, famously popular as *IPTA*. She came during the post-Independence upheaval in the valley, and joined the National Cultural Front. She gave a new and a powerful dimension to Kashmiri theatre and the song division of the Cultural Front. She was one of the personalities who liberated the tradition of Kashmiri theatre from the clutches of the hackneyed feudal concepts. She was the one who introduced a new form of theatrical art – the *Shadow Play* to the new Kashmiri Theatre. She worked most dedicatedly for many years and revolutionized the theatre, and song-and-drama divisions of the cultural movement.

Kong-Posh issue of January 1952 carries an urdu short story titled *yaakoot*, in its urdu section which became a path-breaking story in style and concept. The story was read out in a meeting of Progressive writers of the Cultural Congress. A shy and timid boy of sixteen or seventeen years, who very apprehensively and reluctantly agreed to read out his story. It was with a great persuasion and insistence from some of us who were attending the meeting, that the gathering of writers agreed to listen at the conclusion of the agenda. With his reluctant attitude and down-cast look, the teenage *Umesh Kaul* commenced reading out his *yaakoot*. With minutes of his reading the casual attitude of writers and literati became tense and grim, while listening with rapt attention. When he finished, it became difficult for the attendance to break the stunned silence. D.N.Nadim rose and broke silence and the hypnotic muteness turned into a roaring applause. The then popular urdu short-story writers like *Bansi Nirdosh*, *Somnath Zutshi* and *Akhtar Mohi-ud-din* could not but agree that all the prevailing

styles and crafts of writing have been surpassed, adding a new dimension to concepts of style and to forms of urdu literary writings.

The well known Kashmiri poet *Gulam Ahmad 'Mahjoor'* passed away on 9th April 1952 (PLATE V). An exclusive commemorative volume of *Kong Posh* of April 1952 was issued in his memory in which all the poets and writers offered their tributes through their compositions and creations. I portrayed a sketch of the poet for the title of the commemorative volume (PLATE VI). Amongst the tributes paid were the emotionally optimistic poetic composition titled '*The poet – will he ever die?*' by D.N.Nadim and a life sketch in prose titled '*under the shadowy chinars of Mahjoor*' authored by *Amin Kamil*.

There is a significant observation in many subsequent issues (Dec 1951, Jan 1952) of the journal. The poetry of Premnath 'Premi', a popular poet of the times, was based purely on the popular folk forms. Though he also got occasionally swayed by the prevailing trend of political commitments and sloganist trends; but on the whole he remained conscious of the folk forms and songs which he observed and heard around his simplistic village life. 'Premi's' folk style was a positive contribution to the existing trends of Kashmiri poetry. He used the pastorelle *lullabic* form (Ho-Ho) with dexterity with contemporary content. His usage of motherly affectionate *terms* added extreme sensitivity and emotion to the content.

Premi's style of the chorus of paddy cultivators adds a curvaceous vitality and rhythmic stance to his poems. The lyrical calls of the chorus add hilariousness to the stance of compositions. His mirthful satirical interpretations of life (Ladishah) become the reason for popularity of his songs (*Kong-Posh, May 1952*).

After over-all analysis of the entire collection of the journal it undoubtedly plays a historical role in popularizing the writing in Kashmiri; but hardly contributes anything towards the development of literary forms, their craftsmanship and style. The poetry remained shackled within the boundaries of committed political trend, thus putting the imagination of poets circumvented with a prejustified boundary. There could not be a free personal expression of *word* and *imagination*. Emotions and feelings remained subservient to dictations. The personal freedom for expression and for formal experimentation remained suppressed. As a result we could hardly observe and contribute towards the development of style, form, technique and aesthetics.

The expression of personal feelings and concepts remained a far-fetched cry. No doubt it was Nadim who positively tried to contribute towards formal development of poetry, prose as well as of drama and theatre. Despite his effort, it could not be possible even for him to break the shackles of the commitment. It was only after the passing away of the period and freeing from the commitment that Nadim could surmount the pinnacle of excellence. His post-commitment period is a brocade of variegated aesthetic forms, concepts and imagination. His *vaak* and *couplet* forms are pithy, pregnant and symbolic expressions of thought. His famous poem '*Zalri-zaj*' – (*cobwebs*) is a fabulous variety of Kashmiri words and expressions, through which he establishes his philosophy of life.

Later it was *Rehman Rahi*, who could not but give expression to his free poetic cadence and then giving expression to his suppressed romantic imagination. *Rahi* could be called *Joseph Turner* of Kashmiri poetry possessing the painterly quality that

describes the glow of sun-set like the famous painting *sun-set* painted by *Joseph Turner*. Rahi's twittering of the swallow is compared aptly by him to *Deepak Raaq* against the backdrop of the after-glow of sun-set.

To conclude; the policy of *Kong Posh* is evident from its editorials. These are repeatedly and regularly containing nothing excepting preaching and inculcating political ideas of the time. There appeared no trace

of propagation and discussion on aesthetics art forms, styles, crafts and techniques. The feelings, emotions and imagination were never touched, leaving aside the progressive ideas, concepts and the search for *beautiful, romantic and realistic*. But in the final analysis, one has to accept and acknowledge the founding role played by *Kong Posh*, giving a start to Kashmiri writing and to journalist craft.

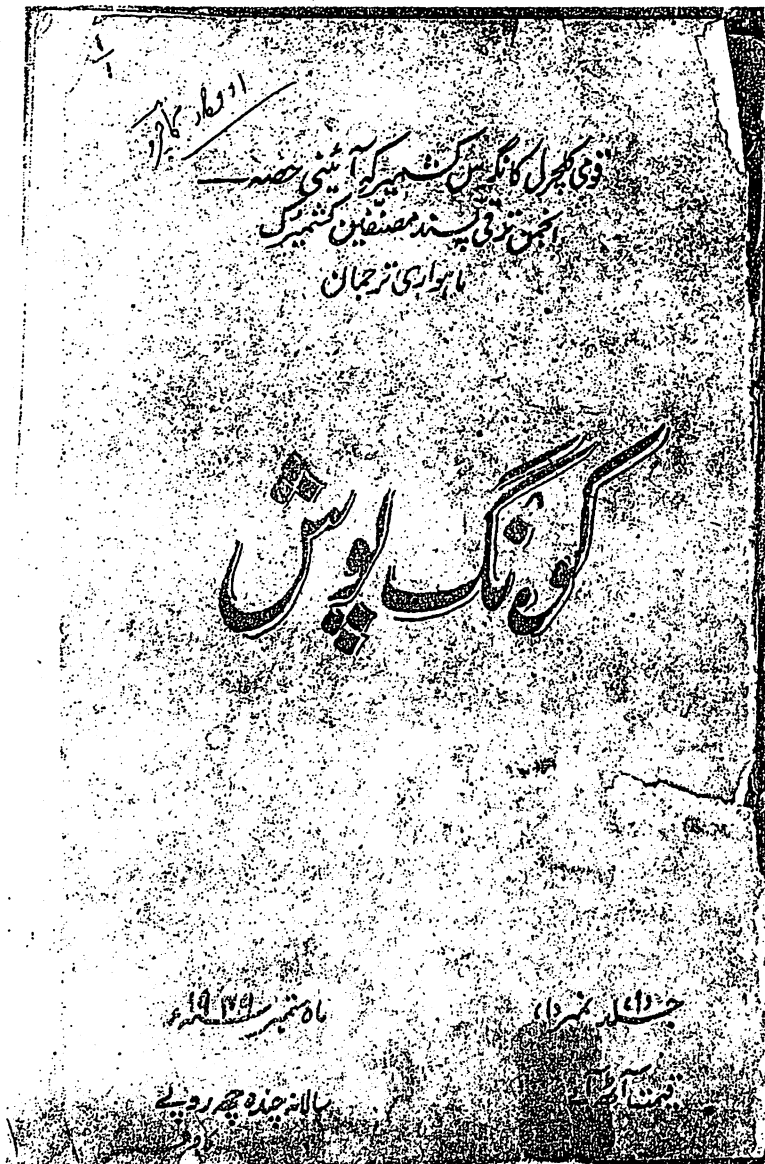


Plate - I

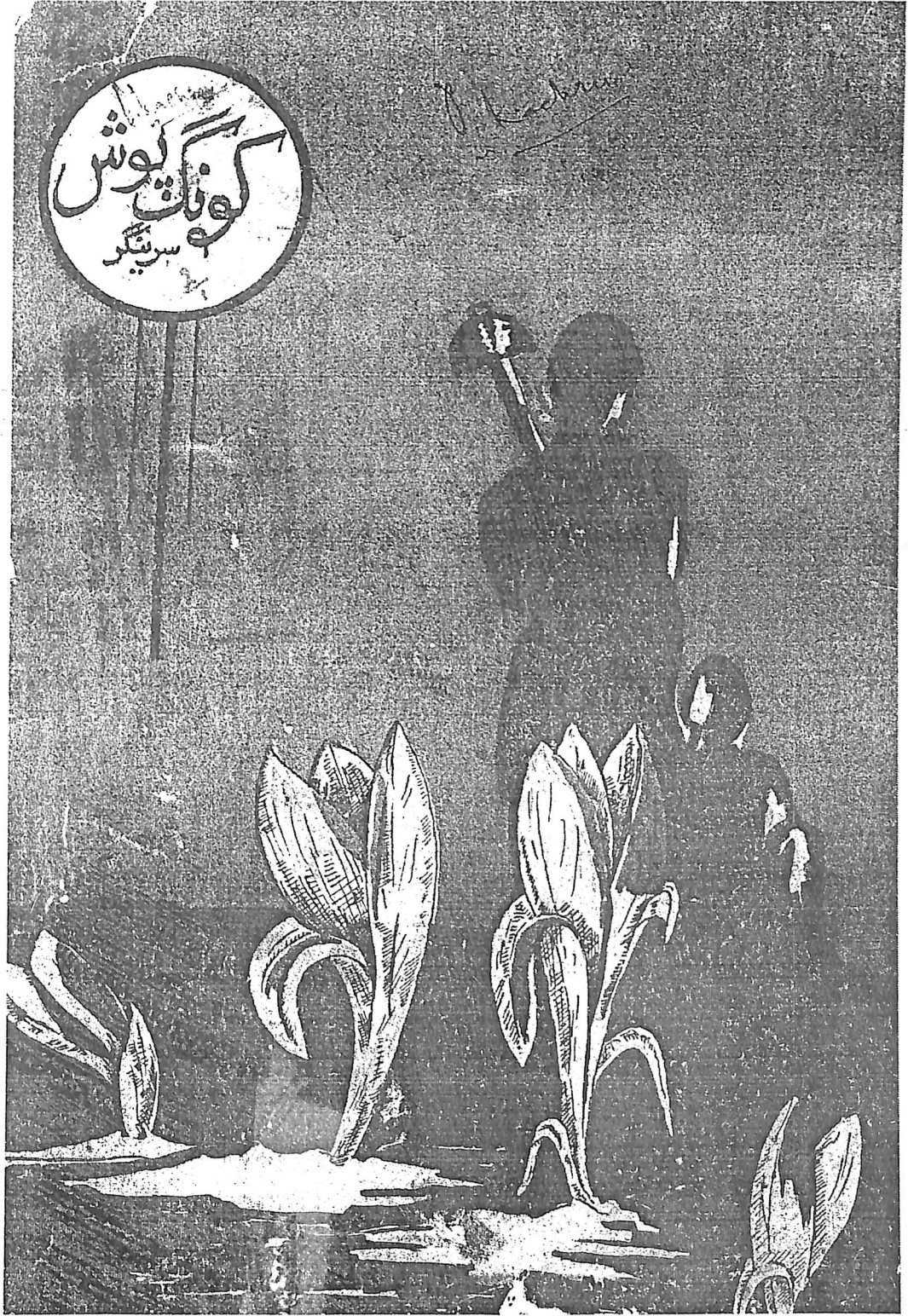


Plate - II

کوکب پوش

جلد ۱	ماہ شمس ۲۰۰۶	Feb. ۱۹۵۵	شماره (۲)
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قوی کلچرل کانگریس نے قلمبرج شاعر سید بنجر کو زندہ سیٹھاہ دکھانے کا شہرہ زبان ہند مشہور عوامی شاعر عبدالستار عاصمی
سندھ فوت بتایا ۱۲ جنوری ۱۹۵۰ء کو کراچی میں ایک بڑے اجتماع میں سید بنجر کی نعش کو شہرہ زبان ہند کے شاعر عبدالستار عاصمی نے
تہ اویس تہوئے نقضاً کیس نہ پور و نہ میر۔ عاصمی صاحب اس شخص ترقی پسند مصنفین کے گرام کا کہیں تہ ترقی پسند ادیب علمبردار۔ عاصمی صاحب
کرا کا شہر شاعری منظر کو خیال نہ پور و نہ میر۔ عاصمی صاحب اس شخص ترقی پسند مصنفین کے گرام کا کہیں تہ ترقی پسند ادیب علمبردار۔ عاصمی صاحب
خاطرہ وقف اس کرمز۔ مقابل جلس کی موت بھور نوہ۔ روح بہند کو لفظ نہ بھنگی نزا نو کا شہرین مکن منفر۔
اگر عاصمی صاحب جیانی طور اسید لکھنؤ سید بنجر کی نعش کو شہرہ زبان ہند کے شاعر عبدالستار عاصمی نے
کرا کا شہر شاعری منظر کو خیال نہ پور و نہ میر۔ عاصمی صاحب اس شخص ترقی پسند مصنفین کے گرام کا کہیں تہ ترقی پسند ادیب علمبردار۔ عاصمی صاحب

Plate - III



Plate - IV

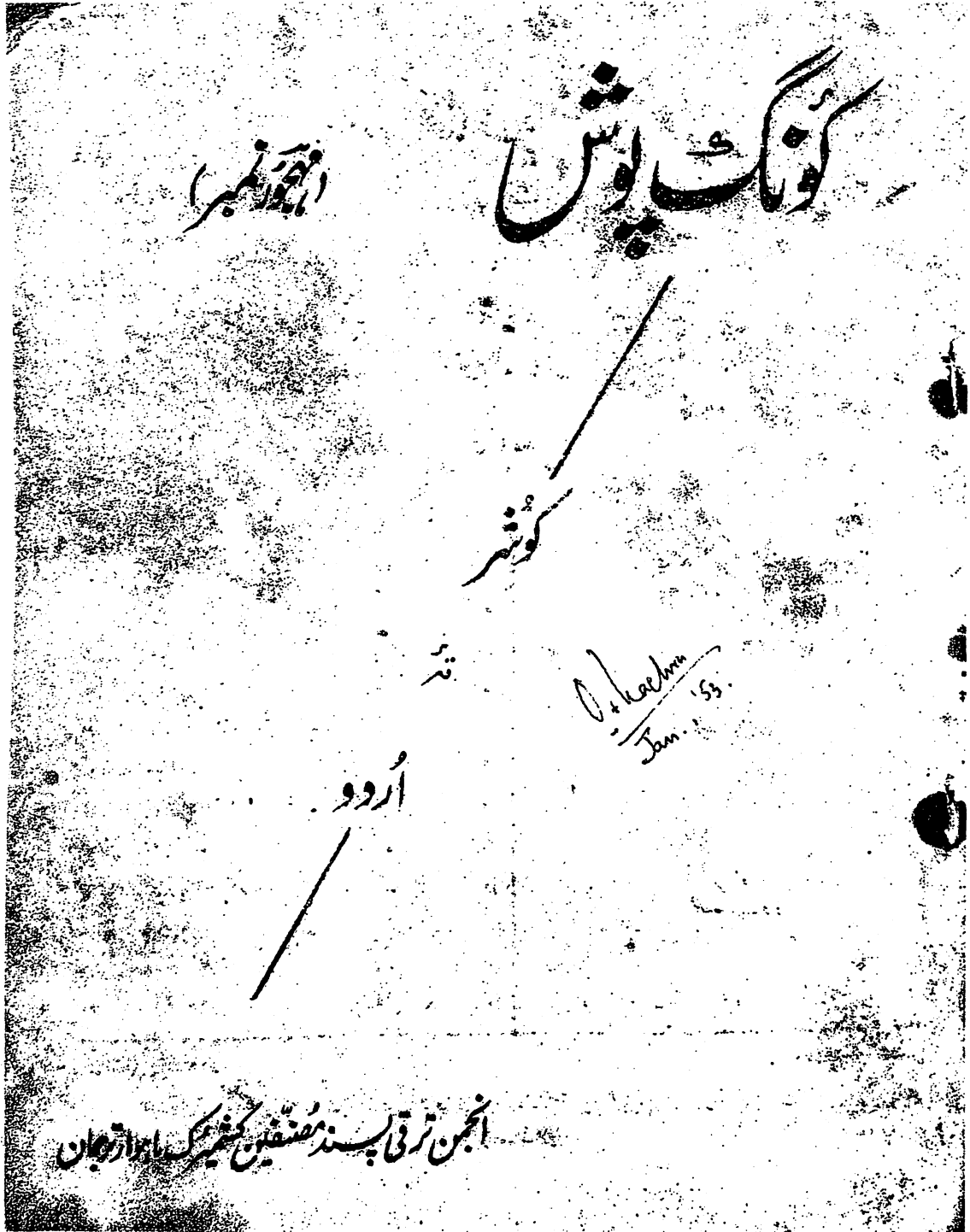


Plate - V



وفات ۹ اپریل ۱۹۵۲ء

مہجور کاشمیری

پیدائش ۳ ستمبر ۱۸۸۵ء

تراوہ یکہ مہجور باغ چھاؤن ° ادہ وینہ آره دل مسولہ کمن
رازدار ناز بردار کو تو می گوم
دل قرار ڈیٹھ مدن دار کو تو می گوم

(مہجور)

Plate - VI

Ancient Temples of Avantipura; Who or What Destroyed Them? **(A Perspective from History)**

S. N. Pandita

“Ancient India has nothing more worthy of its early civilization than the grand ruins in Kashmir, which are the pride of Kashmiris and admiration of travelers. The massive, the grotesque and elegant in architecture may be admirable in parts of India but nowhere is to be found the counterpart of the classically graceful, yet symmetrically massive edifices than in Kashmir,” observes Arthur Neve.

Echoing a similar sentiment, says Francis Younghusband, “And the people who built the ancient temples of Kashmir must have been religious, for the remains are all of temples or of sacred emblems and not of palaces, commercial offices or hotels and they must have at least held that one large idea, else they would not have built on so enduring a scale. They must have been men of strong and simple taste averse to paltry and the florid.”

Among the temples that belong to this genre are the ancient temples of Avantipura. The ancient town of Avantipura marked by its present village called Vantipor is located about 30 kilometres from Srinagar on the bank of River Jehlum. It was founded by Avantivarman, the king of Kashmir from 855 to 883 A.D. In early times, the city was large and the vast masses of the remains seen until recent times in the form of long stretches of stone walls which line up to suggest that they would have been streets in olden times. In addition to these remains are more than half a dozen religious buildings of ancient date. Of these, two and the largest ones are those that were founded by the ruler himself in honour of Vishnu and Siva respectively.

According to Aurel Stein, Rajatarangini informs us that “Avantivarman, before his accession to the throne erected the shrine of Vishnu (Avantisvamin) and after obtaining sovereign power built Avantisvara, the temple of Siva. Alexander Cunningham, however, was wrong in assuming the dedication of both of them to Siva. According to the nomenclature of Kashmir temples the terms ‘isa’ and ‘isvara’ are used in the names of Siva temples and the use of ‘svamin’ or ‘kesva’ is confined to the names of Vishnu temples.

The earliest notice of Avantipura temples by a European dates back to May 3, 1783, when Forster visited the place which he called Bhyteepur during the reign of Timur Shah Durrani. Forster traveled to Srinagar from Anantnag by water and thus saw the Avatisvamin temple quite close to the river bank. He says, “In the vicinity of Bhyteepur are seen the remains of a Hindu temple which though impaired by the ravages of time and more by the destructive hand of the Mohametans still bore evident marks of superior taste and sculpture.”

William Moorcroft visited Avantipura in 1823 on his way from Srinagar to Verinag. As he passed by the temple he described the shrine as a “confused mass of stones”. Moorcroft held the opinion that “earthquakes must have been the chief agents” in the destruction of the temples of Kashmir.

Vigne was in Kashmir about the year 1837. Speaking about the desertion of the town of Avantipura, he remarks, “The want of regular irrigation must always have been troublesome, but I should think that the town

began to be deserted when temples were destroyed by Butshekan or when the ground on which Srinagar stands was first made habitable by draining." However, it is well known that foundation of the new capital of Kashmir had nothing to do with the desertion of the old city of Avantipura as the event took place several hundred years before Sikandar Butshikan.

Baron Hugel traveled to Kashmir in 1835 and described the temples of Avantipurs as "two falling Buddhist temples" -the larger one called Vencadati Devi and the smaller one called Ventimdati.

But the most accurate and perfect account of Kashmir temples is well recorded by Alexander Cunningham in his seminal work titled "Essay on the Arian Order of Architecture" that he published in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1848. With regard to the temples of Avantipura , Cunningham concluded that the silting of the temple had taken place before the time of Sikandar Butshikan.

Cunningham excavated some portions of the temple site and unearthed quite uninjured carvings of trefoil recesses. According to him, "The final and complete silting up of the quadrangle whether by the gradual process of years or some sudden catastrophe had fortunately been the means of preserving the greater part of this peristyle from defacing fingers of time as well as from the destroying hand of Mohamedan bigotry; perhaps at some future day to be unveiled by European archaeologists in all its virgin beauty."

In 1903, the famous Dutch Indologist, Jeanne Philippe Vogel (a great European friend of the present writer's grandfather Prof. Nityanand Shastri) visited the remains of this temple and recommended valuable

measures of its conservation for the first time ever. Four years later in 1907, Sir John Marshall, the then Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India drew the attention of the Kashmir Darbar to the desirability of excavating the site "thoroughly at the earliest opportunity as it seems certain that the most, if not all, of the peristyle can be recovered as well as those portions of the plinth of the temple itself and its entrance porch which are buried now."

Marshall estimated the cost of the excavation at Rupees 5000, then a heavenly sum. The benevolent Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh readily accepted the scheme and the excavation in due course was entrusted to J.C. Chatterji, the designate Director of the State's newly founded Department of Archaeology in 1910. Chatterji exposed greater parts of the peristyle and also opened up part of the courtyard. But his excavations stopped at a level of about 7 to 8 feet below the present ground level that was nearly 10 feet above the floor of the courtyard. As a result, shrines in the corners, stairs, central shrine, basement of peristyle and colonnades- all remained unexcavated. Chatterji's excavation, however, brought to light some coins and fragmentary images and fragments of half-burnt birch-bark manuscripts. This followed with a lull of few years at the excavation site.

It was only in 1913 that excavations were further carried out under the supervision of Daya Ram Sahni of the Archaeological Survey of India. In his Report 1913-1914 submitted to the Survey, Daya Ram writes, "The subjoined account of my excavations at this temple will show to what great extent General Cunningham's remarks have proved true, for there is no doubt that the courtyard had filled up with silt for more than two-

thirds of the height of the colonnades already before the time of Sikandar and if has been gratifying to me to find the lower parts of the colonnades as well the delicate carvings upon them in all the “virgin beauty” predicted for them by General Cunningham.”

Daya Ram further writes, “The work was rendered extremely laborious and difficult by the presence of huge quantities of rough boulders with which the courtyard had been filled up. These boulders had no place in the construction of any part of the original temple, which is composed entirely of well cut and squared stones., but some of them have been employed in later additions to and renewals of parts of the edifice for diverse purposes. The blocks were then gradually rolled down to the floor of the courtyard where they have been stacked neatly. The excavations reveal the fact that the central shrine had been completely destroyed and its material mostly carried away to the capital and used up in the construction of modern houses.”

The eminent archaeologist, in fact, found several architectural stones lying on the bank of the River Jehlum and had them shifted back to the temple. It is worthy to note that when Cunningham published the outlay of the temple, the building was entirely covered with debris. As in the case of Avantisvamin temple, the temple of Avantisvara was also buried under earth and debris.

Writing about the Avantipura temple, the eminent archaeologist R. C. Kak writes, “It has been reclaimed by the removal of an enormous mass of silt and debris which during a thousand years of neglect (for the temple had already silted up when it suffered from iconoclasts) had accumulated to a height of about 15 feet and buried the whole structure except the upper part of the walls

of the gateway and shapeless heap of stones in the centre.”

From the Kalhana’s Rajatarangini we also learn that Avantisvamin temple was desecrated and subjected to “sacrilegious treatment” on several occasions in the Hindu Period and at some point of time during the reign of Kalasa (1081-1089)AD it was used as a fort for military operations. It is interesting to note that in the time of Avantivarman also lived Bhatta Kallata- the pupil of Vasugupta, the founder of Spanda Shastras of Kashmir Saiva philosophy. Kallata wrote Spanda Sarvasva- a commentary on his teacher’s seminal work Spanda Karika..

However, it is so ironic that the great king Avantivarman had a prime minister by the name Shura, whose motto, worth remembering by all in power, was a Sanskrit composition which in translation reads, “This is the time for granting benefits while fortune fickle by nature is present; Why should there be again time for benefits while misfortune is always imminent.” From the records of antiquity it has been claimed that this verse was recited in the minister’s office by a bard without any interruption.

From the afore- mentioned accounts it can be stated that Avantipura temples were neglected and abandoned long before Sikandar struck his iconoclastic hammer on the upper parts of the structure that bore idolatry relics and existed above the ground level.

Also from the conjectural guess about the temple structure made by Cunningham and actual excavation of the lower parts of the colonnades with their delicate carvings intact in all the “virgin beauty”- to use Cunningham’s phrase-, by Daya Ram Sahni,

do tell us that what the iconoclast Sikandar destroyed were only the visible tops of the mostly buried temples that were abandoned long ago to his arrival. There is, however, no doubt that "in the 14th century Sikandar Butshikan completed the destruction which had already begun in the troublous times which followed the reign of Avantivarman."

More so, it is also established that some parts of the Avantisvamin temple were brought into use at a later date as is evident from the discovery of numerous leaves of birch-bark manuscript from some cellar of the temple after it was excavated. This

manuscript contains details of the worship-lamp -oil Dhipa that was used in the temple.

A more clinching proof of the reuse of the temple as a place of worship is provided by the discovery of a Sarada inscription cut on a big baked-clay jar which reads :Om maha sri Avantivarma-Ghata- 1583, a date that corresponds to 1527 AD. The pilgrim who donated the jar, however, preferred to remain anonymous as his name is not recorded on the jar. This inscription is the only solitary independent evidence that confirms the connection of Avantivarman with the town and temples situated at Avantipura.

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- Antiquities of Chamba, 1910, J. Ph. Vogel.
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- Archaeological Remains in Kashmir, 1935, Pandit Anand Kaul.

Historically, it is known that there existed in the Valley a mass of literature pertaining to almost each and every branch of knowledge and human endeavour. This mass of literature included both the Shastras or the divine literature and the literature created by masters in various fields of knowledge. In the category of Shastras, this mass of literature included Agama Shastras, Tantras, including Shaiva Shastras, and associated literature. This corpus of literature was enriched from time to time by the subsequent masters in various fields, including Shaivites, Shaiva Masters and Shaiva scholars. A search into the literature associated with Shaivism in general and Kashmir Shaivism in particular reveals that the mass of literature associated with these streams of knowledge is so vast that it is practically difficult, though not impossible, to talk of the whole lot of what all is available or what all is lost but is known through references. It is still more difficult to compile the references into a comprehensive bibliography for use by Shaiva researchers, scholars and others associated with the subject. Historical records show that a lot of material, of what was available, was lost in the mist of antiquity. Part of this material was lost in Kashmir due to wanton destruction by some intolerant rulers and other zealots of the past.

However, it is seen that from time to time there have appeared many seers, saints, scholars and people of calibre and substance who not only have tried to save and preserve the ancient texts but also have enriched the corpus of available literature by augmenting, publishing, translating the texts or commenting on a specific text, thereby preserving the invaluable texts for posterity. The evidence, of the existence of the ancient texts and related works that have been lost,

and, therefore, are no longer available to us, is found in the quotations or portions of the texts reproduced in other works published from time to time. The evidence is also available through the references quoted in some such works. However, in spite of all this loss, lot more remains to be discussed about and researched upon.

In this context, it is worthwhile to talk about the role played by a number of Sanskrit scholars, including those from the Valley, who selflessly collected, collated, edited and published a number of ancient manuscripts and texts, most of these being ancient Shaiva texts, thereby preserving the treasure of knowledge and preventing it from getting lost into oblivion. It is important to point out here that the noted Sanskrit scholars, who get the credit and appreciation for achieving this laudable feat, were associated with the erstwhile Research Department of Jammu and Kashmir State. The names of the erudite scholars who supported the cause one way or the other and hence can be mentioned with pride include Shri JC Chatterji, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri, Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, Pandit Harabhatta Shastri, Rajanaka Maheshvara and Pandit Jagddhar Zadoo. It is seen that most of these Sanskrit scholars dedicated their lives to the cause of preserving the rare ancient manuscripts and texts from loss without expecting anything in return. However, their efforts would not have borne the desired fruits had not Maharaja Ranbir Singh decided to, 1) collect ancient Sanskrit manuscripts and texts from various parts of the country, and 2) preserve these ancient Sanskrit manuscripts and texts at a designated place, namely, Shri Raghunatha Temple Library, Jammu. The effort would also not have borne the fruits

had Maharaja Pratap Singh not established the Research Department of Jammu and Kashmir State and decided to 3) carry out the study of the collected manuscripts; collate various versions of the available manuscripts on a particular topic and publish the authentic version of the text with annotations, explanations and notes. A brief about these three aspects of collection, preservation and publication of the rare manuscripts and texts is as under:

- Collection of the Manuscripts and other texts:

It is known that a number of scriptures and other historical records, most of them in manuscript form, from Kashmir, form part of many libraries in India and abroad. The collections, made in Kashmir under the express instructions of Maharaja Ranbir Singh known as 'Kashmir collections', form the pride possession of Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Institute (erstwhile Shri Raghunatha Temple Library), Jammu. An idea of the collections can be had from the first catalogue titled Catalogue of Six Thousand Sanskrit Manuscripts published under the direction of Aurel Stein in 1894 AD and from the subsequent Descriptive catalogues of Manuscripts of the Institute published from time to time. There are, however, many other collections, known by various other names, which have a number of manuscripts and texts of Kashmir origin. These include the collections listed, for example, in a) Dr. Buhler's Kashmir catalogue, titled Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts, b) Dr. Bhandarkar Report of collection (1875-76) of Sanskrit Manuscripts of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, c) Prof. P.P.S Shastri's Descriptive Catalogue of MSS of Tanjore Palace Library, and d) Aufrecht's Catalogus Catalogoram. It is learnt that a number of

manuscripts and texts from Kashmir found their way into many libraries in India and abroad due to the initiative of certain private collectors who found the desired manuscripts and texts with many individuals and individual families in the Valley. Some of the libraries which have a good collection, of manuscripts and texts of Kashmir origin, in their possession include Adyar Library, Madras; Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona; India Office Library, London; Iqbal Library, Srinagar; Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Institute, Jammu, just to name a few. It is believed that thousands of manuscripts (by some estimates approximately 6,000 manuscripts in Sharda, Devanagari and some in Takri) of Oriental Research Library, Directorate of Libraries, Research and Archaeology lie in the Allama Iqbal Library of University of Kashmir. In 1990 AD, Kashmiri Pandits left behind thousands of manuscripts in their small libraries in the Valley. The chances to retrieve and restore these rare manuscripts to some libraries now seem to be remote. However, the manuscripts which are still found preserved in various libraries in Kashmir and elsewhere reveal that the manuscripts are not only written in Sharda, Devanagari and other scripts but also are written on burziu pattar (birch bark), koshur kaagaz (paper made by native Kashmiri hands) and other types of papers. Many such manuscripts have not yet been even accessed and taken up either for research or for publication.

Though the history of collection of the Sanskrit manuscripts in the Valley is a separate subject which deserves a detailed discussion in its entirety, yet there are a few instances of some rare manuscripts having come to light by chance or through a determined effort, and, therefore, are of some interest. It is learnt that the rare

manuscript of Bhaskari (A Commentary on Ishvarapratyabhijna Vimarshini of Abhinavagupta by Bhaskarakantha) was found in the custody of a Kashmiri Muslim family, who probably had inherited it from their ancestors. This was purchased and got published. Also worth mentioning is the discovery of the manuscript of Atharvaveda in the custody of Pandit Keshav Bhat Zadoo, grandfather of the eminent Sanskrit scholar Pandit Jaggadhar Zadoo in the Valley. Rudolph von Roth, Professor of Oriental Philology and chief of the University Library at Tubingen, was a Sanskrit scholar who had handled Vedas and was interested in the manuscript of Atharvaveda. According to S.N. Pandita, the author of Aurel Stein in Kashmir, Roth persuaded the British authorities in India to try and locate such manuscripts in Kashmir. In 1875 AD Maharaja Ranbir Singh sent the manuscript to Sir William Muir, the then Lieutenant Governor. The manuscript was a messy bundle of grimy, tattered birch bark leaves, 287 pieces held by a cord. On seeing the condition of the manuscript, help of Georg Buhler, then Professor of Oriental Languages at Bombay, was sought to restore it to health. This was admirably done by Buhler and the cleaned and bound manuscript was then sent to Rudolph von Roth. After Roth's death, the manuscript became one of Tubingen University's greatest treasure - the only copy of the manuscript preserved anywhere in the world. Also, worth mentioning is the success story of Aurel Stein having been able to procure the original manuscript of Rajatarangini, called the Codex Archetypus, in 1889 AD through the good offices of Dr. Suraj Koul, the then Governor of Kashmir. The discovery of this manuscript and its subsequent use by Aurel Stein resulted in the English translation of Rajatarangini, which brought to light the hidden treasure

of five thousand year old history of Kashmir.

As regards the collection of the Sanskrit manuscripts and other texts by the Maharaja of Kashmir, it is a matter of satisfaction to note that the collection of a number of rare and valuable manuscripts was possible because of the initiative of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1856 – 1885 AD), the initiative of a number of European Indologists and the support provided by a number of able Kashmiri Pandits. At the outset the credit for organizing the collection and preservation of scriptures, chronicles, historical records and other literature pertaining to Kashmir's rich heritage goes to Maharaja Ranbir Singh, whose love for scholarship was unmatched. The European Indologists and researchers, who, because of their love for Indian antiquities made a good collection, deserve all praise and appreciation for the work done and the imprint left behind. Last of all, the credit is also due to a number of Kashmiri Pandits, who, equipped with a good knowledge of the antiquities, command over Sanskrit language and in-depth understanding of Shastras and related texts, assisted the Europeans in this endeavour. The overall mission, in the first place, became a success because of Maharaja Ranbir Singh who had ordered that all such manuscripts which are treasures of the historical past be collected, preserved and catalogued. As is known the famous Shri Raghunatha Temple Library (now known as Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Institute), Jammu was established by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1857 AD, during the first year of his reign. Initially more than 300 rare manuscripts written in Sharda and Devanagri were collected and kept in the library. The effort continued and more and more manuscripts were discovered and made part of the library. Equally laudable are the efforts of the European Indologists

who unearthed the treasure in the form of Sanskrit manuscripts and related texts in the Valley and elsewhere. With a desire to look into the Indian antiquities, the European researchers and scholars tried to have an insight into the hidden treasure in the Valley. They were in know of the fact that Kashmiri Pandits were known for their literary excellence and the contributions they had made. They also knew that hundreds of the ancient and rare chronicles and scriptures existed in the Valley, most of these in the private libraries of Kashmiri Pandits. But, they were not sure of what all was extant and what all had been destroyed by some of the earlier rulers and other zealots. It was shrouded in mystery. These European Indologists started a search to collect the available manuscripts from whichever source they could. This drive started somewhere in the last quarter of nineteenth century.

The first organized effort to collect the manuscripts was by Georg Buhler who worked for the Government of India. He was on a mission to collect Indian manuscripts and for the collection of the manuscripts he received orders from Government of India in July 1875 AD. As part of this mission, he came to the Valley, of course after he was granted permission by Maharaja Ranbir Singh, to search and collect the manuscripts. His efforts resulted in a huge collection of manuscripts and other texts not only in the Valley but also in other places like Rajputana and Central India. He published the findings of his tour in his report titled 'Detailed Report of a Tour in search of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Kashmir, Rajputana and Central India' in 1877 AD. During his tour to various places Georg Buhler made a collection of nearly 14000 manuscripts, out of which nearly 300 Sanskrit manuscripts were discovered in the

Valley. On completion of his tour he faithfully deposited the collection with the Government. The manuscripts in turn became the pride possession of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona and from there of many other libraries. It is worth mentioning that because of his achievements, Georg Buhler came to be known as 'Master Collector of Indian Manuscripts' and his collections as the 'Buhler Collection'.

The next organized effort to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in the Valley was undertaken by Aurel Stein, a student of Georg Buhler. In fact, Buhler had entrusted Aurel Stein the task of looking for the Codex Archetypes, the original Sanskrit manuscript of Rajatarangini. Buhler himself had tried hard to find the manuscript but luck had deserted him till his departure in 1875 AD. Aurel Stein, on his arrival in the Valley, started his work with a search of the original Sanskrit manuscript of Rajatarangini and was lucky to get it as mentioned above. Besides this success, Stein, during this search, also discovered a number of manuscripts of his interest. During his visits to Kashmir between 1888 and 1905 Aurel Stein acquired 368 Sanskrit texts which he purchased at his expense and carried them along with him. The collection was formally handed over in 1911 AD to curators of the India Institute, Oxford. A selection from his collection also found way to Vienna Imperial Library and Tubingen University. Regarding other collections of manuscripts, mention can be made of 'Bower Manuscript' and 'Gilgit manuscripts'. Colonel Hamilton Bower, later Major General, was a military intelligence officer who chanced to stumble on the discovery of 6th century manuscript now known as the 'Bower Manuscript' from a mound in Central Asia while he was on a trail to track down the murderer of a Scottish traveler

Dalgliesh. About the 'Gilgit Manuscripts', it is known that these manuscripts too have been discovered by chance in July 1931 when a group of boys while playing hit a mound only to watch manuscripts tumbling out of it. At that point of time Aurel Stein was returning from his failed 4th Central Asian expedition from the Chinese Turkestan. Traveling through Ladakh then, he was asked to look into the collection and study it. He, however, declined the suggestion and expressed his inability to do so. But it was Aurel Stein who announced the existence of 'Gilgit Manuscripts' to the world. The name of Pandit Madhusudan Kaul 'Shastri' got associated with these manuscripts when he was subsequently asked to study the collection.

- Preservation of the Manuscripts and preparation of a Catalogue:

The Sanskrit manuscripts and other texts collected under the orders of Maharaja Ranbir Singh from various sources were deposited in Shri Raghunatha Temple Library, Jammu. The first attempt to prepare a catalogue of the manuscripts in the Shri Raghunatha Temple Library, Jammu was undertaken by Aurel Stein. Because of his engagements at Lahore, the task was entrusted to Pandit Govind Kaul and Pandit Sahjabhatta. The mammoth work started by the two Pandits in 1889 AD, under the direction of Aurel Stein, resulted in the completion and publication of The Catalogue of Six Thousand Sanskrit Manuscripts of the Raghunath Temple in 1894 AD. Incidentally, this is the first comprehensive catalogue of the library. It was much later that the library brought out catalogues of the manuscripts preserved there. Between 1970 and 2004, the library published 4 volumes of the Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the years 1970, 1973, 1984 and 2004 AD,

the latest one having been compiled by Dr. Dhani Ram Shastri and Dr. Kamal Kishore Mishra, now India's Cultural Attaché to the Republic of Fiji.

- Publication of Texts under Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (KSTS):

The compilation of relevant information and subsequent publication of the catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts by various libraries generated a lot of interest among many researchers and scholars in the field to investigate and carry out research on the treasure available with various libraries and publish the findings for the benefit of the common people. It is seen that this investigative trend had already started in the Valley in the last quarter of nineteenth century when some European Indologists, with the assistance of Kashmiri Pandits, besides searching the manuscripts and other texts and preparing catalogues of the available manuscripts also studied some selected works and published their findings. Subsequently, the Research Department of Jammu and Kashmir State got involved in the study, editing and publication of ancient manuscripts in a big way till its existence around 1947 AD. Shri Parmanand Research Institute, Raghunath Mandir, Srinagar also did some useful work and published a few works.

As regards the publication of some rare manuscripts and texts by the Research Department of the Jammu and Kashmir State, it is important to mention that the Department made a significant contribution in editing and publishing ancient manuscripts and texts in general and Shaiva texts in particular. As is known, the Research Department of the Jammu and Kashmir State was established by Maharaja Pratap

Singh in 1903 AD. It is noticed that during its existence of nearly five decades, the Department had adopted different names like, the Archaeological and Research Department Jammu & Kashmir State (1911), the Research Department Jammu & Kashmir State (1916) and Archaeology, Research and Museum Department (1947). The first Director of the Department was Shri J.C Chatterji and thereafter the Department was nurtured by many erudite Sanskrit scholars. Those who headed the Department include Mahamahopadhyaya Mukund Ram Shastri, Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, Pandit P.N. Koul Pushp and Pandit Jagddhara Zadoo (he was the last to occupy the position before the Department was closed). It is noted with satisfaction that the Department, during its existence of five decades, did a remarkable job. Besides undertaking the work of collection (some specific manuscripts were either collected or procured on loan), compilation and collation, the Department edited and published a number of volumes, under the series, known as Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, with a KSTS number assigned to each published volume. A study of the specific titles published under the series shows that majority of the titles pertain to Kashmir Shaivism. It may, however, be noted that the attention, regarding the availability of Shaiva literature in the manuscripts collected in Kashmir, was for the first time drawn by Georg Buhler in 1875 AD. Through his tour report, mentioned above, he had indicated the availability of Spanda Shastra and Pratyabhijna Shastra, produced by Kashmiris under the general name Shaiva Shastras, in the treasure.

It is of interest to note that the first volume published under the Kashmir series of Texts and Studies is Shivasutra Vimarshini. The volume was edited and published by Shri J.C

Chatterji in 1911 AD. However, from the preface of the said volume it is learnt that the volume was not supposed to be the first volume to be published as due to certain difficulties the originally planned volume could not be published and, therefore, had to be substituted by another title. According to J.C Chatterji, "the first volume of the series to be published was The Ranvira Prayashchitta-Nibandha which His Highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur wanted the Department to take in hand first. But although quite ready for the press, it cannot be published yet owing to certain difficulties in regard to its printing. It is a work in MS, covers over 1000 pages (foolscap size). It forms part of a great work entitled Dharma Shastra Pancha, compiled by order of His Late Highness Maharaja Ranavira Simha and consists largely of quotations from nearly all branches of Hindu scriptures."

Subsequent to the publication of the first volume, the Department in the subsequent years published nearly 90 volumes, all appearing under the authority of the Maharaja, mentioning in addition the title of the work, the KSTS number, the volume number, as applicable, and the name of the editor. A sample of the cover of a publication under the series is shown in the photograph. A study of the various titles published, under the series during its existence of five decades of the Department, shows that four editors were involved in the task of editing and publishing. These editors, in chronological order, are Shri J.C Chatterji, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri, Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri and Pandit Jagddhara Zadoo. However, in executing the stupendous task the editors have taken the help and support of many other Sanskrit scholars of the Department,

a fact acknowledged by them in their acknowledgements in some of the works. Now, just to give a feel of the coverage of the titles published by these editors, during their tenures, it may be worthwhile to list some of the titles published by them, as under:

- The Shivasutra Vimarshini, Being the Sutras of Vasugupta with the Commentary called Vimarshini by Kshemaraja, edited by JC Chatterji, 1911 (KSTS No. I)
- The Shiva Sutra Vartika by Bhaskara, edited by JC Chatterji, 1913 (KSTS No. IV)
- The Spanda Karikas with the Vritti of Kallata, edited by JC Chatterji, 1913 (KSTS No. V)
- The Paramarthasara by Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogaraja, edited by JC Chatterji, 1916 (KSTS No. VII)
- The Vijnana Bhairava with Commentary partly by Kshemaraja and partly by Shivopadhyaya, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. VIII)
- The Vijnana Bhairava with commentary called Kaumadi by Ananda Bhatta, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. IX)
- The Stavachintamani of Bhatta Narayana with Commentary by Kshemaraja, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. X)
- The Shat Trimshat Tattva Sandoha with Commentary by Rajanaka Ananda, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. XIII)
- The Ishvarapratyabhijna Vimarshini of Utpaladeva with Commentary by Abhinavagupta, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. XXII, Vol. I)
- The Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta with Commentary by Rajanaka Jayaratha, edited by Mukund Ram Shastri, 1918 (KSTS No. XXIII, Vol. I)
- The Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta with Commentary by Rajanaka Jayaratha, edited by Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, 1918 onwards (Vols. II – XII)
- The Svachhanda Tantra with Commentary by Kshemaraja, edited by Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, 1921 onwards (Vols. I – VI)
- The Shivadrishti of Shri Somanandanatha with the Vritti by Utpaladeva, edited by Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, 1934 (KSTS No. LIV)

- The Ishvarapratyabhijna Vivritivimarshini by Abhinavagupta, edited by Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, 1938, 1941 & 1943 (KSTS Nos. LX, LXII & LXV, Vols. I, II & III)
- The Paratrishika Laghuvritti by Abhinavagupta, edited by Jagddhar Zadoo, 1947 (KSTS No. LXVIII, Vol. I),
- The Paratrishika Vivriti of Rajanaka Lakshmirama, edited by Jagddhar Zadoo, 1947 (KSTS No. LXIX, Vol. II)
- Bodhapanchadashika with the Vivarana by Harabhatta Shastri, edited by Jagddhar Zadoo, 1947 (KSTS No. LXXVI)
- The Paramartha-charcha of Abhinavagupta with Vivarana by Harabhatta Shastri, edited by Jagddhar Zadoo, 1947 (KSTS No. LXXVII)

To conclude, it is important to re-iterate and highlight the importance of the works published by the Research Department Jammu and Kashmir State under the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. Looking at the colossal effort put in collating, editing and publishing the works under the series by the Pandits of the Department, one can only hold the head high with pride and feel indebted to the erudite scholars for having bestowed to us the treasure of knowledge through this Series. The literary fraternity will ever remain grateful to them for having made available the treasure trove at a time when the Shaiva knowledge and its practice was on decline but was under revival because of the coming on the scene of Swami Lakshman Joo. The published texts, in a way, triggered a fresh wave of

enthusiasm among the seekers of knowledge. The available texts filled the gap to a great extent and helped in the revival of the Shaiva traditions.

Lastly, from the available information it is not clear which of the titles, published under the series towards the closing years of the Department, corresponds to the last volume. But, what is clear is the fact that with the publication of the last volume, the golden era of the literary activity, as far as the revival and restoration of some of rare manuscripts of Shaiva Shastras and other literary works is concerned, came to an end.

Author of 'Encyclopedia of Kashmiri Pandit Culture and Heritage'



Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies.

No. LX.

THE
ISVARAPRATYABHIJNĀ VIVRITIVIMARSINI

BY
ABHINAVAGUPTA

EDITED

BY

PAṆDIT MADHUSŪDAN KAUL SHĀSTRĪ, M. A., M. O. L.

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